



Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program



August 2021

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program is committed to providing equitable and just programming, resources, funding, and technical assistance to schools, farmers, and partners in the local food system.

Welcome New (and Old) Team Members!



State Local Procurement Manager

We are excited to introduce Shannon Newerth-Henson, who recently joined the farm to school team as the State Local Procurement Manager! Shannon will provide technical assistance to school food service programs and farms, develop the Harvest of the Season Promotional Program, host local procurement webinars and trainings, and lead the Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program. Welcome, Shannon!

Shannon is an Indiana native and graduated from Purdue University with a Bachelor's in Plant Science. She moved to the Natural State shortly after graduation and served a year-long term in AmeriCorps as a FoodCorps Arkansas service member at two elementary schools in Van Buren. For the past two years, Shannon has been educating students at early childhood education centers in the River Valley, and her passion for farm to school continues to grow! She is also passionate about conservation and is an acting member of the Board of Directors for Keep Van Buren Beautiful, one of 13 certified Keep America Beautiful affiliates in the State.

Reach Shannon via email at shannon.henson@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

Local Foods Specialist

We are also thrilled to share that Mark Nelson will be re-joining the farm to

school team for the next few months. Mark will assist with the reporting requirements for the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act. Welcome back, Mark!

Mark recently completed a one-year term as the Farm to School Innovation Lead, AmeriCorps VISTA member, with the Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. A native Arizonan, he has now called Arkansas home for the past 13 months and plans to stick around in the Natural State. Prior to moving to Arkansas, Mark spent two years in the Peace Corps as a Food Security Specialist and Agroforestry Extension Agent in Zambia. Over the past year, Mark has plugged into the Little Rock urban gardening community and his desire to combat food insecurity, enhance access to healthy, local food, and serve others has continued to grow.



Reach Mark via email at mark.nelson@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

We're Hiring - State School Garden Manager



State School Garden Manager

We are hiring a State School Garden Manager! The State School Garden Manager will provide technical assistance to schools, develop farm to school resources, host webinars and trainings, and lead the school garden contest and grant program.

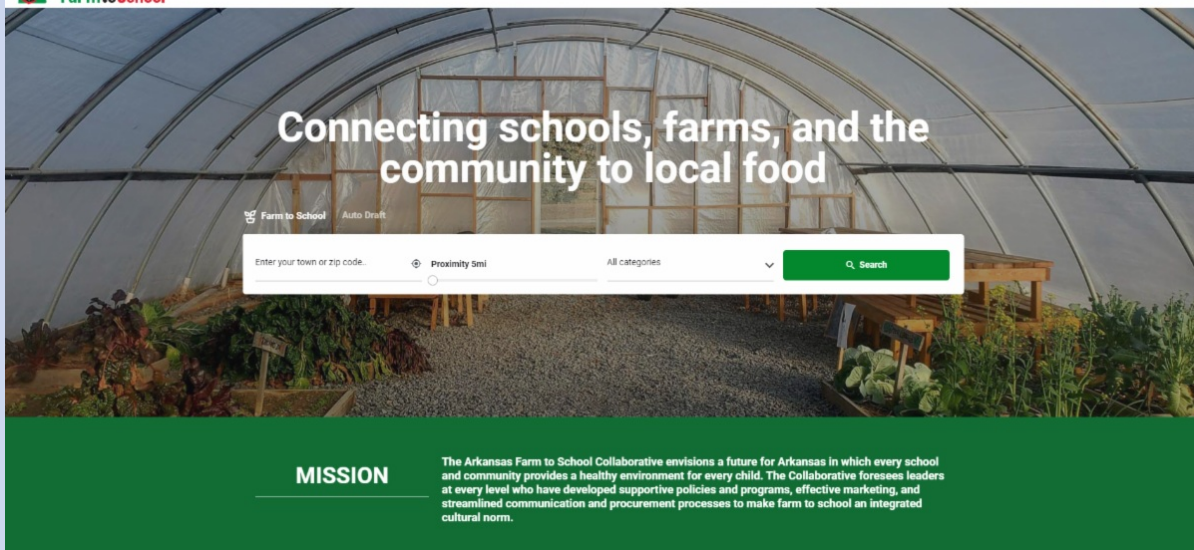
This is a part-time grant funded position available for one year. Qualified applicants will begin interviewing on August 9, 2021.

[Apply Here](#)

New Arkansas Farm to School Website!

The new Arkansas Farm to School website will be launching soon! The website will be full of information about school gardens and farm to school integrations into the classroom, cafeteria, and community. It will also include an interactive school garden and local procurement map.

Stay tuned for the details later this month!



Webinars and Trainings

Summer Vegetable Garden Tour: Tomato Harvest

August 19, 2021 at 2:00 PM

Join Heifer USA Horticulture Specialist, Sarah Bakker, live on YouTube for a virtual, interactive tour! Heifer USA will show you around their 3.5-acre certified organic Market Garden located in Perryville, AR, and answer questions live throughout the broadcast.



Do you have questions about crop and variety selection? Trellising and pruning? When to harvest? Then tune in to ask Sarah all about Heifer's Market Garden operation!

[Register Here](#)

Funding and Sustainability Solution Webinar



**SGSO
NETWORK**
School Garden Support Organization Network
A Learning Community of School Garden Support Professionals

August 25, 2021 at 1:00 PM

The School Garden Support Organization Network is hosting a webinar on funding and sustainability solutions for school gardens across the nation.

The webinar will explore challenges related to sustainably funding school garden programs and include information on fundraising, grant writing, and other revenue streams.

[Register Here](#)

Successful Food Product Development for New Food Businesses: Managing Food Quality & Safety Webinar Series

August 31st - September 2, 2021, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM everyday

Are you an entrepreneur developing new and exciting products? Do you have questions about ensuring the safety of your product? If so, this is the program for you!

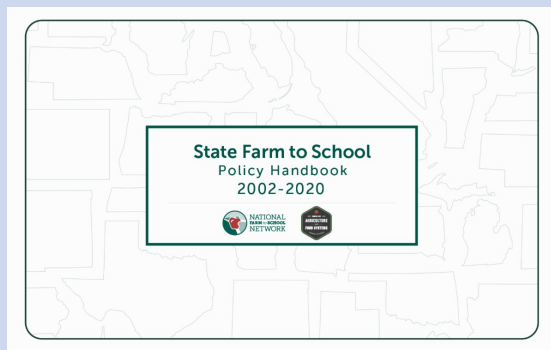
This program is designed specifically to address product development and food safety issues faced by small food processors.

Participants will learn food science basics, important considerations when developing a new food product, key elements required for product labeling, and be provided an overview of key regulatory requirements for small and emerging food businesses, such as entrepreneurs and local food processors.



[Register Here](#)

National Updates and Resources



State Farm to School Policy Handbook: 2002-2020

The National Farm to School Network and the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School have released a new resource for farm to school policy advocates.

The Handbook summarizes and analyzes every proposed farm to school bill and resolution introduced between January 1, 2002, and December 31, 2020, from the 50 states, District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. It enables readers to search bills by both jurisdiction and topic, and includes analysis of trends, case studies, advocacy resources, and more.

Arkansas bills and policies are included in the handbook. This resource can be a great reference for local farm to school programs, so be sure to check it out!

[View Handbook](#)

USDA Farm to School Census

New Data

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released the 2019 Farm to School Census, and the data shows that farm to school continues to grow!

During the 2018-2019 school year, 65.4% of school food authorities (SFAs) reported participating in farm to school activities, reaching up to 42.8 million students, and investing \$1.2 billion into communities through local food purchase.

Learn more and see what the data shows about Arkansas by clicking below!

[View Census Data](#)



Upcoming Grant Opportunities

William T. Grant Foundation - Institutional Challenge Grants

Deadline: September 14, 2021



The Institutional Challenge Grant, offered by the William T. Grant Foundation, encourages university-based research institutes, schools, and centers to build sustained research-practice partnerships with public agencies or nonprofit organizations in order to reduce inequality in youth outcomes.

Applications are being welcomed from partnerships in youth-serving areas such as education, justice, child welfare, mental health, immigration, and workforce development. They especially encourage proposals from teams with African American, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American members in leadership roles. [Apply here.](#)

[Visit Our Website](#)

